

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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R 082133Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCEUR

USAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 029570

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL, BE, NO, DA

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT

FOR AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE FROM DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL

1. WE HAVE NOTED INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATING THAT
POLITICAL FACTORS MAY BE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS THE FOUR
EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES MOVE TOWARD THE MOMENT OF
DECISION REGARDING AN F-104 REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT. ALTHOUGH
THE FOUR DEFENSE MINISTERS ARE SLATED TO CONSIDER THE STEER-
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ING COMMITTEE REPORT ON FEBRUARY 17, TO DETERMINE WHETHER

THEY CAN SUBMIT A JOINT RECOMMENDATION TO THEIR CABINETS,
WE REALIZE GOVERNMENT DECISIONS MAY NOT ALL FOLLOW
IMMEDIATELY.

2. YOUR REPORTING INDICATES THAT IN THE CASE OF THE BENE-
LUX COUNTRIES, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT MAY BE THE FIRST TO
CHOOSE AN AIRCRAFT IF THE DUTCH ARE INCLINED TO POSTPONE
UNTIL AFTER THE LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE IN APRIL. WE
REALIZE THAT THE FRENCH ARE PRESSING ESPECIALLY FOR AN
EARLY BELGIAN DECISION. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT THE DANISH
AND NORWEGIAN DECISIONS COULD WELL COME AT SOME LATER DATE.
WHILE THERE HAS BEEN CONFLICTING INTELLIGENCE ON THIS POINT,
IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT AMONG THE FOUR THAT
THEY WILL ALL CHOOSE THE SAME REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT, NOR DOES
THERE APPEAR TO BE ANY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING TO THIS EFFECT

EVEN BETWEEN BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS.

3. IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING YOU SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THE
NEED TO TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY IN THE COMING WEEKS TO
ADVANCE THE F-16 AS THE USAF AIRCRAFT OF CHOICE, AS WELL
AS PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND
WHITNEY IN THEIR EFFORTS WITH THE POTENTIAL CONSORTIUM
SUB-CONTRACTORS. WE BELIEVE IT TO BE IMPORTANT FOR THE
CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES TO SELECT THE F-16 IN THE INTERESTS
OF RATIONALIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION AMONG THE NATO AIR-
FORCES. THIS WILL NOT ONLY MAKE FOR EFFICIENCIES IN
SUPPORT COSTS BUT WILL INCREASE FORCE EFFECTIVENESS IF
SEVERAL ALLIES, INCLUDING THE U.S. WITH F-16'S STATIONED
IN EUROPE, CAN SHARE A COMMONALITY OF EQUIPMENT, NOT ONLY
IN AIRFRAMES BUT ALSO AVIONICS AND ENGINES AS WELL AS
MUNITIONS. ADDITIONALLY, YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT AN
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE SELECTION OF THE F-16 IS
ITS LOW LIFE-CYCLE COSTS, STEMMING IN PART FROM SIGNIFI-
CANT SAVINGS IN FUEL CONSUMPTION OF THIS SINGLE-ENGINE
AIRCRAFT. ALSO, OTHER COST SAVINGS WILL ACCRUE TO ALL
USERS FROM COMMON LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE. WE
BELIEVE THAT THE COMMON SELECTION AND DEPLOYMENT IN WESTERN
EUROPE OF THIS NEW ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AIRCRAFT WILL
CONSTITUTE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COLLECTIVE DEFENSE
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EFFORTS, AND WE HAVE NOT HESITATED TO MAKE THIS VIEW CLEAR
TO ALL LEVELS OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN OUR CONVERSATIONS
WITH THEM. YOU SHOULD REITERATE ALL OF THESE POINTS AT
THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LEVELS OF THE CONSORTIUM GOVERN-
MENTS, POINTING OUT OUR INTENTION (FIRST REVEALED TO
DEFENSE MINISTERS LAST SEPTEMBER) TO DEPLOY 240 OF THESE
AIRCRAFT TO USAF. KISSINGER

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